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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION  
TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2009

In Today's Papers

PM Erdogan and TGS Chief General Basbug Meet Ahead of Security Council Meeting

All papers: PM Erdogan and General Basbug held a tete-a-tete meeting on Monday. Papers call the meeting "an emergency meeting" prior to a National Security Council (NSC) meeting today. Mainstream Sabah reports that Erdogan and Basbug met to discuss the controversy about an alleged plan against religious fundamentalism and new regulations permitting civilian courts to take up charges against military suspects. The meeting lasted for one hour and 35 minutes and no statement was made after the meeting. Mainstream Hurriyet says Basbug emphasized three points during the meeting: the alleged coup plan in question was not prepared by TGS, the draft bill allowing civilian courts to try military officials is creating concern in the army, and the intelligence service must find the source of the "ugly defamation campaign" against the army. Meanwhile, Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports Erdogan told Basbug "the regulation allowing civilian courts to try military officials is important to EU harmonization," and "is a source of concern for EU officials."

Editorial Commentary

Deniz Zeyrek wrote in liberal Radikal: "TGS Chief Ilker Basbug's remarks during his press conference Friday indicate the National Security Council (MGK) will discuss the coup controversy, the fight against terror, talks in Cyprus, and developments in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. While the MGK is holding a critical meeting, U.S. CENTCOM Commander, General David Petraeus, is coming to Turkey. Turkey wants to continue to cooperate with the U.S. to end PKK presence in Iraq and to destroy PKK camps in the Kandil Mountains. Meanwhile, General Petraeus will bring concrete plans regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan to the agenda."

Bilal Cetin of mainstream Vatan writes: "The General Staff and the government are divided by deep disagreements about a controversial plan to fight religious fundamentalism. The PM describes the alleged plan as "a document" while the TGS Chief calls it "just a piece of paper." Apparently, the PM and the military do not trust each other and neither party is likely to persuade the other to abandon the debates about the alleged coup plot."

President Gul Comments on the Controversial New Law Allowing Civilian Courts to Prosecute Military Officials  
Aksam, Hurriyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Vatan, Zaman:Turkish President Abdullah Gul said Monday that legal experts of the presidency were examining the amendment passed by the Parliament on Friday that allows for trials of military personnel before civil courts. Turkish Government Spokesman, State Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek said it was up to the President to approve or disapprove the law on the trial of military personnel. At his arrival in Ankara after his formal visit to China, President Gul told reporters that he would not make his decision based on politics. "Our legal departments are examining in detail bills passed by the parliament. If we see any contradiction to the constitution, then we will send it back to the parliament to be debated once again. Our experts are working on it right now," Gul said. Gul also warned against steps that would "place Turkey in a state of emergency," by threatening Turkey's democratic regime.

Education Minister Cubukcu: "No Mature Decision on the Halki Seminary Yet"

Mainstream Hurriyet reports that in response to questions of journalists yesterday, Education Minister Nimet Cubukcu said "a political decision needs to be made in order to solve the controversy about Halki Seminary. When the government makes a political decision on the issue, it will be announced by the Prime Minister or the Government Spokesman. There is no matured political decision on the issue yet." The Seminary has been closed for 38 years. Hurriyet says the Fener Patriarch wants to restore the seminary's status to the level it was prior to 1971. Before 1971,

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the seminary was a private school administered by the Education Ministry.

Turkey and the EU Open Talks on Taxation

Mainstream Sabah reports that the seventh meeting of the Turkey-EU Accession Conference at ministerial level will be held in Brussels on Tuesday, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Turkish State Minister & Chief EU Negotiator Egemen Bagis will represent Turkey at the meeting, the ministry said on Monday. Turkey and the European Union are set to start negotiations over a policy chapter on taxation as part of their talks aimed making Turkey a member of the 27-nation bloc. The chapter on taxation would be the eleventh of a total of 33 chapters.

DAS Bryza Meets TRNC President Talat

CNN Turk reported that Cypriot Leader Mehmet Ali Talat received Matthew J. Bryza, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, in Nicosia Monday. Speaking to reporters following his meeting with Talat, Bryza said that he had a "very constructive" meeting with Talat. "An agreement reached in Cyprus would help all of our strategic interests," Bryza stressed. Congratulating the two communities of Cyprus for opening the Yesilirmak Gate, Bryza said that this was "an encouraging step." "I believe that the opening of the Yesilirmak Gate will lead to new energy and excitement on the part of the two communities," Bryza said. Bryza said he hoped that "the energy created by the opening of the Yesilirmak Gate will reflect on the negotiations in the island" and that the leaders reach an agreement by the end of the (current) year.

Holiday in Iraq! (Milliyet)

Media draw attention to the celebrations in Baghdad and throughout Iraq today to celebrate the withdrawal of U.S. forces from cities. In "American Soldiers Are Withdrawing from Cities," mainstream Haberturk reports, "In the sixth year of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, today U.S. forces begin their withdrawal from city centers," and "now the Iraqi government will take responsibility for national security." Mainstream CNN Turk reports, "Today feasts and festivals will be held in towns and cities all over the country," to mark "the long-awaited withdrawal of U.S. forces and the turnover of responsibility for security to Iraqi forces." Fikret Ertan of Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "Today will be a very historic day for Iraq," as "President Maliki has declared the day a holiday" and "we hope that Iraq will be successful in maintaining its own

security" as "American forces have occupied Iraq since March 2003 and today they will begin to withdraw from cities." He also notes, "Today is like a double holiday for some Iraqis" as "it also marks the 89th anniversary of Iraq's independence from England."

#### Recount in Iran

Media note the partial recount in Iran did little to ease the tensions following the June 12th elections. Mainstream Sabah reports in "The Final Official Decision in Iran: Ahmadinejad Is The Victor of The Elections," that "The Guardian Council, in response to bloody street protests against the election results, have reached the final point in the June 12th elections," and "for the second time, Ahmadinejad has officially won the election." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet criticizes today's recount in various locations, "A Random Recount in Iran," as "only ten percent of the votes were recounted." Mainstream Hurriyet reports, "The votes were recounted, the results were the same," as "Ahmadinejad was declared the winner." Liberal Radikal reports, "The tension in the streets continues despite the regime's iron-fisted response" against the protestors, but President Ahmadinejad "wants an investigation into Neda's death." In a related story, Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines, "Did The CIA Kill Neda?" as "The Tehran administration suggests the CIA killed Neda intentionally in front of the cameras," and "the bullet used to kill her is not used by the security forces."

U.S. Not Pleased With Turkey's Response to Iranian Elections. Ahu

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Ozyurt of mainstream Milliyet reports from Washington, "Sources in the State Department say the U.S. is not happy with Turkey's response to the Iranian elections," as "it is understood that Turkey is in a special situation as Iran's neighbor," but "Turkey was among the first countries to congratulate Ahmadinejad."

#### Editorial commentary on Iran and US-Turkey Relationship

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Iran is getting tougher, both inside and out. It looks like the Ahmedinejad administration is choosing to act with violence in order to pressure his opponents. He is also trying to pressure the EU countries and the U.S., who criticized him for his post election attitude. Iran should understand that this policy is not in its own interest or favor."

Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The identity of U.S. allies in Turkey did change in 2003 with the March 1st bill and now it changes again. The U.S. counters the PKK threat and distances itself from the AKP and Fethullah Gulen movement. Moreover, the Obama administration abandons the Broader Middle East Initiative. The Turkish Armed Forces are the new U.S. allies in Turkey."

#### TV News (CNN Turk)

##### Domestic

- Main opposition CHP says it will apply to the Constitutional Court for the annulment of new regulation for the trial of army officials in civilian courts. The regulation has been submitted to President Gul for approval.
- Istanbul police chief Celalettin Cerrah hands over his post to Huseyin Capkin. Cerrah has been appointed as Osmaniye governor.
- The wages of civil servants will increase in the second half of 2009.
- Turkish exports decline by 33.9 percent since the beginning of the year.

##### World

- Russia begins its largest military exercises in the Caucasus since last year's war with Georgia.
- Russia and Azerbaijan sign an agreement for Russia to buy 500 million cubic meters of gas annually starting next year.

